

stamps, or any other form of Federal benefit denied by law.

We expect that these comprehensive sweeps by our agencies will save taxpayers millions upon millions of more dollars, in addition to the billions already saved from our crackdown on Social Security fraud. We will ensure that those who have committed crimes against society will not have an opportunity to commit crimes against taxpayers as well.

The American people have a right to expect that their National Government is always on guard against every type of waste, fraud, and abuse. It is our duty to use every power and every tool to eliminate that kind of fraud. We owe it to the American people to ensure that their Social Security contributions and other tax dollars are benefiting only those who worked hard, played by the rules, and are, by law, eligible to receive them. That's exactly what we're trying to do.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Memorandum on Prevention of Prison Inmates Inappropriately Receiving Federal Benefits

April 25, 1998

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Use of the Social Security Administration's Prisoner Database to Prevent Prison Inmates from Inappropriately Receiving Federal Benefits

The Social Security Administration ("SSA") is required by law to suspend Old Age and Survivors and Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income benefits to certain persons who are incarcerated. To carry out the law, the SSA, with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and various State and local entities, developed a database of persons who are incarcerated. Other agencies, too, including the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Labor, and Veterans Affairs, operate Federal benefit programs that have statutory requirements to

reduce, suspend, or terminate benefits to those who are incarcerated.

All of these agencies have been carrying out the requirements to suspend or reduce Federal benefits to prison inmates. However, the agencies' enforcement of these requirements independently, rather than in coordination, is not the most efficient use of Government resources and has not allowed the agencies to enforce these requirements to the greatest effect. Therefore, to provide for a coordinated governmentwide effort to improve the implementation of the laws permitting suspension or reduction of Federal benefits to prison inmates and to use Government resources more efficiently, I hereby direct executive departments and agencies to take the following actions, to the extent permitted by law:

(1) By November 1, 1998, the Social Security Administration shall provide access to its prisoner database, on a reimbursable basis, to Federal agencies that administer benefit programs and to appropriate State and local entities that administer benefit programs in cooperation with Federal agencies. The SSA shall assist these agencies as necessary to allow quick and efficient access to the SSA prisoner database. By May 1, 1999, the agencies should make operational their computer systems that are to conduct the matches between their benefit program databases and the SSA prisoner database;

(2) The Departments of Education, Labor, and Veterans Affairs and Food Stamp agencies acting as agents for the Department of Agriculture, shall conduct matches between their benefit program databases and SSA's prisoner database to identify ineligible recipients of benefits on their benefit rosters. Agencies that have begun to conduct matches of their benefit program databases with SSA's prisoner database or other agencies' databases shall continue that work;

(3) Other executive agencies with benefit programs shall review such programs and determine whether it is appropriate and cost effective to conduct a match of their benefit program databases with the SSA prisoner database;

(4) Based on their matches with the SSA prisoner database, agencies that identify ineligible recipients shall immediately take action to suspend, reduce, or terminate benefits as permitted by law; and

(5) The agencies shall work with the Commissioner of Social Security and State and local governments, where appropriate, and take whatever actions are practicable to carry out this memorandum. The Commissioner of Social Security shall report to me within 180 days on the actions the SSA and other agencies have taken to implement this memorandum.

I believe that this coordinated governmentwide approach to terminating, suspending, or reducing Federal benefits to prison inmates will more fully carry out the intention of the Federal laws restricting payment of benefits to prison inmates and will provide savings in Federal benefit programs.

William J. Clinton

**Remarks at the White House
Correspondents' Association Dinner
April 25, 1998**

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. McQuillan, Mr. Powell. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

As you know, I have been traveling to other lands quite a lot lately, and I just want to say what a pleasure it is for Hillary and me to be here in your country. [Laughter] Since I arrived here—[laughter]—I've been awestruck by the beauty of your landscape, the spirit of your people, the color of your native garb. [Laughter]

Now, the crowds who greet me here are not quite as adoring as in other nations I've visited lately—[laughter]—but they seem occasionally friendly, nonetheless. I've even sampled some of your indigenous cuisine, your hamburgers, quite tasty, sort of a meat sandwich. [Laughter]

It appears that democracy is thriving here. There are regular elections, contested with vigor, honored by some—[laughter]. In the legislature, persistent coup attempts so far have failed to upend the balance of power. [Laughter] You have a lively, independent press, confident in its judgment and bold in

its predictions. [Laughter] And persistent, I might add.

Yes, this Washington is a very special place, and Hillary and I will never forget our visit here. [Laughter]

Now, as I have come to do on these tours, I want to take just a few moments to reflect on our shared history. The past decades, indeed centuries, are filled with regrettable incidents. Mistakes were made. [Laughter] Injustices were committed. And certainly the passive tense was used too much. [Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, I regret so much—I regret our long neglect of the planet Pluto. [Laughter] It took until 1930—1930—to welcome Pluto into the community of planets, and that was wrong. [Laughter] And I am so sorry about disco. [Laughter] That whole era of leisure suits and beanbag chairs and lava lamps—I mean, we all had to endure the cheesiness of the seventies, and that was wrong. [Laughter]

Then there's the Susan B. Anthony dollar. [Laughter] It did look too much like a quarter. And that was wrong. [Laughter] The expression, "happy campers." Oh, it was cute the first couple of times, but it got real old real fast. [Laughter] I recently used it at a Cabinet meeting, and that was wrong. [Laughter] Pineapple on pizza—some things are just wrong. [Laughter]

I'd also, in this moment of cleansing, like to take just a moment to reflect on past treatment of the White House press corps. I apologize for the quality of the free food you've been served over the years. [Laughter] At the price, you deserved better. It was wrong. [Laughter] For many years when the space that is now the briefing room in the White House was a swimming pool, reporters had to tread water for hours on end. [Laughter] And that was wrong—sort of. [Laughter]

And I'd really like to apologize for all the information you've had to attribute to anonymous sources over the years. Of course, that apology has to be off the record, and for that I am truly sorry. [Laughter] But now that we have put the issues of the past behind us, I really would like to thank you for inviting me to tonight's dinner. This is the night I get to poke fun at you. That is my definition of executive privilege. [Laughter]